

## Moral living

Every once in a while there is a news story of somebody who got lost, perhaps in some wilderness area or perhaps at sea. When they are found they often reveal that they got disoriented and confused about where they were and which direction they were going. You may even hear that they “went in circles” in their attempt to find their way. How does that happen? How can a person go in circles without even knowing it? Many of these people had access to a map of some sort or at least had a general idea of where they were when they started. How can they get so lost that they can’t even find their way back? Usually, it occurs because of not really paying attention.

Interestingly, life can be much the same if we don’t pay attention. Many end up in the midst of challenges that they have faced before or completely disoriented and confused about where life has



ended up. Being human means sometimes we will make mistakes and bad choices despite knowing that they don’t align with our goals and values. Then, despite vowing to change, we may make the same mistakes again. We may find ourselves asking, “Why does this keep happening to me?” If we aren’t paying attention, it is easy to lose track of where we are, or to follow misleading paths that take us far away from our desired destination. It is important that we have a way to orient ourselves regularly and make sure our progress is aligned with our goals. We need a moral compass. A compass is essential in navigation in order to keep a straight course. While a map (mental or physical) is necessary in order to get a bird’s-eye view of the overall picture and to plan the route you wish to follow, the compass is what helps you keep every footstep going in the right direction. It is the process of

which we align daily choices with our foundational values.

The moral compass is calibrated through regular contemplation of the personal faith and foundational values which power it. The moral path is followed by consciously living according to a personal code of conduct which may include behaviors and attitudes that should be avoided, as well as regular spiritual rituals or efforts which are designed to keep one’s life connected to the greater meaning.

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